

STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
AND PUBLIC FACILITIES
DIVISION OF STATEWIDE PLANNING

TONY KNOWLES, GOVERNOR

3132 CHANNEL DRIVE
JUNEAU, ALASKA 9980 1-7898
PHONE: (907) 465-4070
TEXT: (907) 465-3652
FAX: (907) 465-6984

June 4, 2002

Mr. Duane Dvorak
Director, Community Development
Kodiak Island Borough
710 Mill Bay Road
Kodiak, AK 99615

Subject: Comments on the draft Southwest Alaska Transportation Plan

Dear Mr. Dvorak:

Thank you for your thoughtful comments concerning the Southwest Alaska Transportation Plan. We will address each of the concerns raised in the order mentioned in the letter. Briefly, they are:

- *Kennicott* written out of Southwest Alaska
- Kodiak as homeport for *Tustumena*, and possibly *Kennicott*
- Suggested clarifications/additions on pages S-3, 17, and 29

Kennicott not out

Recent experience employing *Kennicott* within the region on a temporary basis has led us to adjust wording in the final plan more favorably to its potential use in Southwest Alaska. Ultimately the scheduling of flexible assets such as *Kennicott* and *Tustumena* is an operational decision, not a planning one. For the time being, the concern for operating efficiency in the current austere budget environment dictates a careful employment of assets to limit losses and maximize opportunities for system revenue generation.

No recommendation on homeport in the plan

We see no need to advance a homeporting recommendation in the Southwest Alaska Transportation Plan. Frankly, the concept of a homeport has had little, if any, bearing on the way *Tustumena* operates. We greatly appreciate the support and advocacy Kodiak Island Borough has historically provided on behalf of the Marine Highway System, and your willingness to offer your community as a homeport. You have made a very strong case for making Kodiak the site of a single facility to support ferry operations in Southwest Alaska. We have passed your letter on to AMHS managers for their future consideration.

In the meantime I will quote from a letter from AMHS sent July 13, 2001 to City of Kodiak Mayor Carolyn Floyd:

The homeporting of the *Tustumena* is an operational issue that requires additional study. Issues such as schedules, logistical support, crew “change port” needs, and general accessibility all need to be studied.

Clarifications and additions

Page S-3. We will reword “road/rail network” to “mainland surface transportation network.” A bit wordy, but we agree that the use of “road/rail network” could mislead concerning the presence of rail facilities at Homer.

Page 17, Table 4. We do not concur with the suggested modification. The purpose and need statement on page 17 is to *improve* intra- and inter-regional connectivity. The ferry service strategy advanced in Table 4 (page 17) is to ***increase service in the region***. It does not necessarily follow that we should also adopt a strategy to *increase service between regions*, particularly if that would contradict the next strategy, ***ferry service efficiency***, shown in the table on page 18.

Note that consideration of the ***ferry service efficiency*** strategy leads to the concept of more regular service between Kodiak and Homer, contributing to an *improvement* in inter-regional connectivity without necessarily *increasing* ferry service overall.

Page 29. We will include the project in the final version of the plan for the reasons you have cited. The reason we did not include it in the draft is because it was not in our Needs List, nor on the State’s RAPIDS database. After researching it further, we determined that the sponsoring agency is Department of Fish & Game and the project is being developed under their Sport Fish Recreational Boating and Access Program. For more information on this project, check with the Division of Sport Fish 907-465-4180.

Again, we appreciate your valued participation in this planning process and look forward to your continued partnership as the plan moves forward to implementation.

Sincerely,



J. Eric Taylor
Area Plans Coordinator
907-465-8958
eric_taylor@dot.state.ak.us

copy to: Rex Young, DOT&PF Central Region Planning
Jim Potdevin, DOT&PF AMHS Planner